

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATTORNEYS GENERAL

2030 M Street, 8th Floor
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
Phone (202) 326-6259
Fax (202) 331-1427
<http://www.naag.org>

CHRISTOPHER TOTH
Acting Executive Director

March 3, 2008

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Attorney General of Idaho

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Attorney General of Nebraska

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Attorney General of Georgia

Via Facsimile

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

To The Leadership of Congress:

We the undersigned Attorneys General, write to express our concern about the severe cuts to the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grants (Byrne/JAG) that were contained in the FY 2008 omnibus appropriations bill. We also write to ask that you restore the funding that was cut.

The Senate had funded the FY 2008 Byrne/JAG program at \$660 million and the House at \$600 million in each of their respective appropriations bills. The omnibus bill that was enacted into law, however, cut the Byrne/JAG program by 67% of its FY 2007 funding level, from \$520 million to \$170 million. These funding cuts will devastate state law enforcement efforts if they are not restored in this year's supplemental appropriations bill.

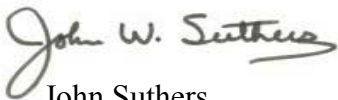
Byrne/JAG funds a variety of important programs in every state and territory, including multi-jurisdictional drug enforcement, treatment interventions, police training, technology improvements, crime prevention programs, and crime victims' assistance programs. Byrne/JAG is currently the only source of funding available for multi-jurisdictional drug enforcement, including methamphetamine initiatives, and is critical for drug courts, law enforcement information sharing, gang prevention, and prisoner reentry programs.

A 67% cut in the Byrne/JAG funding will force state law enforcement agencies to shut down multi-jurisdictional drug and gang task forces, lay off police and prosecutors, and cease to fund programs proven to assist drug-addicted citizens to again become productive members of society. With the economic downturn and a possible increase in crime due to a weakened economy, the cuts could not have come at a worse time. Additionally, significant budget problems still face state and/or territorial legislatures while there is an increase in heroin, prescription narcotic, and methamphetamine abuse in the states and territories.

Without law enforcement, drug addicts rarely seek treatment. The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) estimated that in 1995 untreated drug and alcohol addiction cost the nation \$276 billion in hidden expenses such as lost productivity and crime. The human cost is even higher and cannot be calculated. The Byrne/JAG cuts have the potential to further weaken the nation when it is already immersed in a housing crisis and an economic downturn.

We ask that you restore Byrne/JAG funding in FY 2008 so that we can continue to protect the citizens of our states, territories and of this nation against drug abuse, crime and violence.

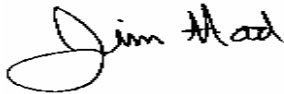
Sincerely,



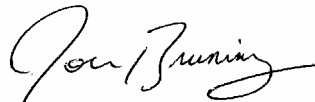
John Suthers
Attorney General of Colorado



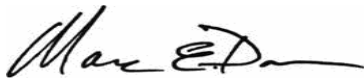
G. Steven Rowe
Attorney General of Maine



Jim Hood
Attorney General of Mississippi



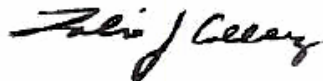
Jon Bruning
Attorney General of Nebraska



Marc E. Dann
Attorney General of Ohio



Troy King
Attorney General of Alabama



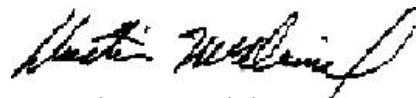
Talis J. Colberg
Attorney General of Alaska

/s/ Fepulea'i A. "Afa" Ripley Jr.

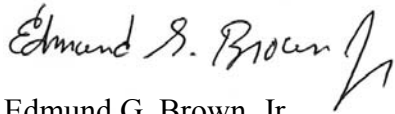
Fepulea'i A. "Afa" Ripley Jr.
Attorney General of American Samoa



Terry Goddard
Attorney General of Arizona



Dustin McDaniel
Attorney General of Arkansas



Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Attorney General of California



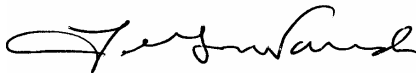
Joseph R. Biden, III
Attorney General of Delaware



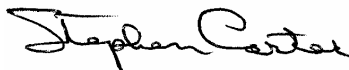
Bill McCollum
Attorney General of Florida



Alicia G. Limtiaco
Attorney General of Guam



Lawrence Wasden
Attorney General of Idaho



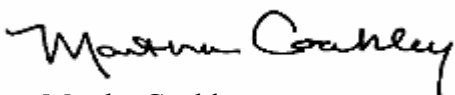
Stephen Carter
Attorney General of Indiana



Stephen Six
Attorney General of Kansas



James D. "Buddy" Caldwell
Attorney General of Louisiana



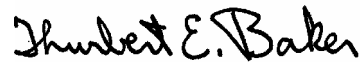
Martha Coakley
Attorney General of Massachusetts



Richard Blumenthal
Attorney General of Connecticut



Peter Nickles
Interim Attorney General of D.C.



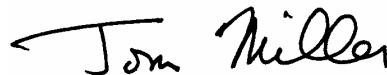
Thurbert E. Baker
Attorney General of Georgia



Mark J. Bennett
Attorney General of Hawaii



Lisa Madigan
Attorney General of Illinois



Tom Miller
Attorney General of Iowa



Jack Conway
Attorney General of Kentucky



Douglas Gansler
Attorney General of Maryland



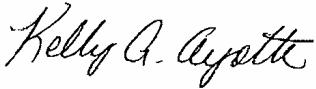
Michael Cox
Attorney General of Michigan



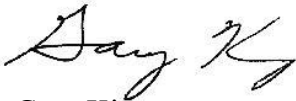
Lori Swanson
Attorney General of Minnesota



Mike McGrath
Attorney General of Montana



Kelly Ayotte
Attorney General of New Hampshire



Gary King
Attorney General of New Mexico



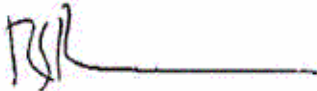
Roy Cooper
Attorney General of North Carolina



Matthew T. Gregory
Attorney General of N. Mariana Islands



Hardy Myers
Attorney General of Oregon



Roberto J. Sanchez-Ramos
Attorney General of Puerto Rico



Henry McMaster
Attorney General of South Carolina



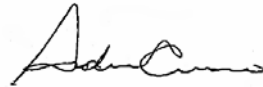
Jeremiah W. Nixon
Attorney General of Missouri



Catherine Cortez Masto
Attorney General of Nevada



Anne Milgram
Attorney General of New Jersey



Andrew Cuomo
Attorney General of New York



Wayne Stenehjem
Attorney General of North Dakota



W.A. Drew Edmondson
Attorney General of Oklahoma



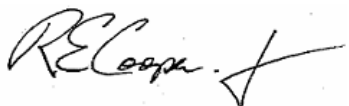
Tom Corbett
Attorney General of Pennsylvania




Patrick C. Lynch
Attorney General of Rhode Island



Larry Long
Attorney General of South Dakota



Robert E. Cooper, Jr.
Attorney General of Tennessee



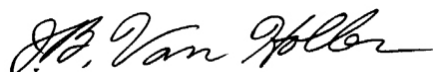
Mark Shurtleff
Attorney General of Utah



Vincent Frazer
Attorney General of Virgin Islands



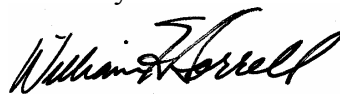
Rob McKenna
Attorney General of Washington



J.B. Van Hollen
Attorney General of Wisconsin



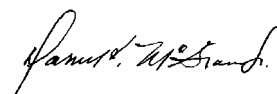
Greg Abbott
Attorney General of Texas



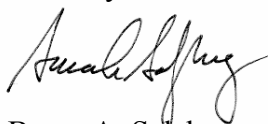
William H. Sorrell
Attorney General of Vermont



Robert McDonnell
Attorney General of Virginia



Darrell V. McGraw, Jr.
Attorney General of West Virginia



Bruce A. Salzburg
Attorney General of Wyoming

Cc: The Honorable David Obey, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations;
The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations;
The Honorable Alan Mollohan, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies;
The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies;
The Honorable Robert C. Byrd, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations;
The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations;
The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski, Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies;
The Honorable Richard C. Shelby, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies